

THE CHIMNEY AND THE HOUSE

DECORATIVE POSSIBILITIES NOT GENERALLY APPRECIATED.

Few Chimneys on Most American Country Houses, Owing to Limited Use of Open Fireplaces. Architects Giving More Attention to Chimneys Examples.

One of the decorative details of the country house that American architects have not been able to avail themselves of to any great extent is the chimney. Yet the simplest roadside cottage in England will have its chimneys so designed as to contribute in some way to the artistic charm of the house. Now, again, there is an increasing tendency to utilize the chimney for decorative purposes, which is due to the growing use of brick in country house construction. American manufacturers of brick are turning out such beautiful products that houses made of this material are growing more popular every day. Then architects are urging the use of brick and other materials of this kind in place of the prevailing wood, which they severely condemn when clients desire a durable and not too expensive house.

This recommendation of such materials as brick and stone applies also to the stoves and concrete houses which are so popular nowadays and it is only as a protest against the overwhelming popularity of wood that architects so urge the masonry houses. They claim that every advantage resides with the structure of this character. Such houses so

every cent expended goes to make the house more valuable.

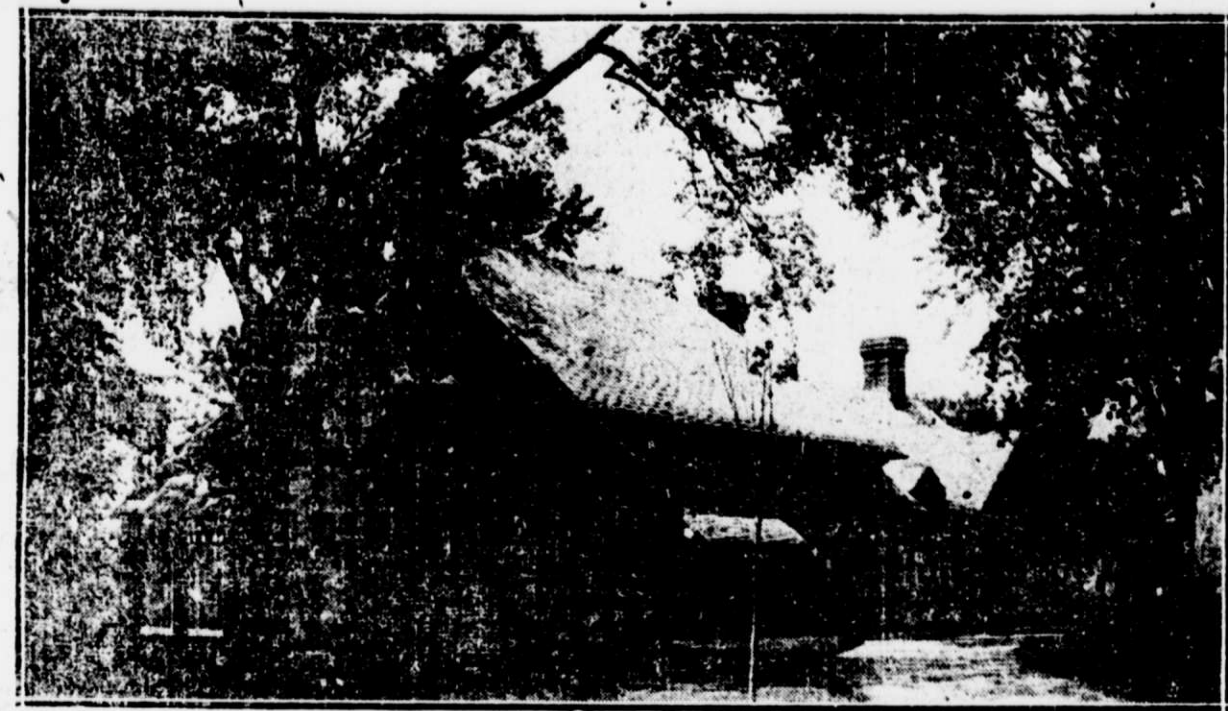
There is of course an excellent reason for the scarcity of chimneys on American country houses. In an English house of even the most humble character every room is provided with a fireplace and every fireplace has its flue. So it is inevitable that the chimney is an essentially important part of the problem of construction in these houses. In the case of the more pretentious buildings with more rooms and with hallways or corridors that are also to be heated there is an increased number of fireplaces which demand a greater number of chimneys.

So the chimney is a question upon which the English architect is compelled to spend a certain amount of thought. The natural outcome of this has been the tendency to make the chimney decorative in the small modern houses just as it used to be in the imposing medieval structures. It has always been a peculiarity of English architects that they have devoted more attention to the chimney than their colleagues of any other nation. There was a period in which the French architects or the Italian dwellers with the same loving care on the design of the chimneys as nearly every English architect of earlier periods felt it his duty to do.

This tradition has survived until it is practically to the modern English house that one must look for the highest decorative merit of the chimney as a decorative detail. Of the pictures shown here there are in markedly English styles of architecture. These are also in brick and were published in the Boston magazine called the *Brickbuilder*. American architects



M. T. Reynolds, Architect. CHIMNEYS ON A BRICK HOUSE IN AN UP-STATE TOWN.



RED BRICK CHIMNEY TO CONTRAST WITH HALF WOOD STRUCTURE.

far as their suitability to climatic conditions is concerned are warmer in winter and cooler in summer than buildings of any other material. Their ultimate cost is less in that every cent spent on a brick or stone building goes to supply some essential part of the house. In wooden houses on the other hand there is great waste in the piazzas, pergolas, bay windows and similar departures from the really essential features of the structure. In the case of a masonry house, however,

have usually contented themselves by adding as the decorative feature of a house one very large chimney. In frame houses there is occasionally a red brick chimney. American country houses made of wood and painted either gray or white, or left the color of the natural timber, are not infrequently ornamented by a contrasting brick chimney. They give accent to a house by breaking the long lines of the roof, apart from the contrast in color that may be afforded.

Another typically American use of the chimney as a decorative feature may be found in some of the stone houses in Pennsylvania and New York State. Here the chimney is not infrequently made of boulders piled up on one another and plastered together. A detail of this kind on a frame house may be made not only decorative, but characteristic of the region in which the house is built. Then architects select the kind of stone to be found in the neighborhood. One of the



BRICK HOUSE WITH CHIMNEYS AN IMPORTANT DECORATIVE DETAIL.

DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SITES

A COMMODITY THAT IS GROWING VERY SCARCE.

Few Plots Available for Modern Office Buildings. Are Left in Broadway Below Chambers Street—Activity in the Old Slip Section A Forecast.

Since the notable rise of values on lower Broadway six to ten years ago caused by the office building movement lower Manhattan has experienced no advance of any consequence in real estate. For the last three to five years the leading speculators and operators have devoted their attention to uptown neighborhoods. Washington Heights, Times Square, the Bronx, the Pennsylvania district, Fifth avenue, Thirty-fourth street, Sherman Square and other districts have been before the public, but very little attention has been given to the downtown section.

In the last two or three years a number of large estates have put their downtown holdings on the market. The Lillard estate and the Whitney estates, the Spencer estate and the Bruce estate are examples. Apparently one large auction sale would follow the other with but little breathing spell in between. These sales occurring during a period of depressed business conditions and with few professional real estate men interested in downtown property, the results were as should have been expected, the properties were sold on a declining market. Larger were scarce and each downtown sale brought lower prices than the previous one. Many of the sales concerned downtown and uptown property, and in most cases the average prices were satisfactory to the seller only because the uptown market was strong.

Thus many large holdings in lower New York have been liquidated, but in

the liquidation prices have been forced far below intrinsic worth and it is but a question of a short time when this will be realized. Indeed it is already realized by not a few professional real estate dealers. During the last three months the better class of trading has been down town with several sales and quick resales. Weakly held properties on Broadway from City Hall to Canal street, have been taken over by strong interest, and when one considers the fact that below Chambers street, hardly any property for improvement can be bought now at any price, then the future of middle Broadway can be appreciated. Broadway property from City Hall to Canal street is cheap. In ten years time we shall marvel at the low prices quoted for it today. There will always be successful business men like F. W. Woolworth and corporations, banks, estates and investors looking for plots for large office buildings, and so far as Broadway is concerned they must go north. Broadway property will surely be in demand. To think that the office building movement will stop is as absurd as to think that the commercial growth of New York city will cease. Another neighborhood that has been overlooked and where values have been forced lower than conditions warrant is the extreme East Side section south of the Brooklyn Bridge, particularly in the vicinity of Old Slip, on South, Front, Water and Pearl streets. In one of these Old Slip blocks my office has made seven sales in the last thirty days; on Pearl street we have in the last year or eighteen months bought a dozen properties for clients.

Take the Old Slip section for example. The Cotton and Coffee exchanges are a stone's throw away, the largest financial exchanges a few blocks west, it is close to Wall street, readily accessible to all downtown districts, and a neighborhood which appeals to a diversified and varied line of business. Values in this district have declined to an absurdly low figure,

but in my judgment the bottom has far below reached and they will come back more quickly than they went down. Four sales of one property, all at substantial and quick profits—this is a recent record. The property in question is still under contract, and the last purchaser is a member of a New York Stock Exchange house who is buying for a corporation in which he is interested. Rents in this district are increasing. This is particularly true of store and left buildings, as the supply of such buildings is limited. With every plot accumulated for a large improvement just so many fewer store and left buildings are left in the market for rental purposes and just so many more tenants for such buildings are forced to seek new quarters. I have always believed in lower New York really because to me there are certain basic conditions that make its final value stronger, more permanent and fixed than that of reality in any other section.

First and foremost the entire financial center of New York, and this means the country, is down town and will never in all probability be changed. The exchanges are definitely located there and the large financial interests, including our leading corporations, the banks, life and fire insurance companies, etc., own their own buildings. Those doing business with these interests must be located near them, and as these interests grow larger and larger and as the commercial growth of New York increases just so rapidly will values increase. The lower end of Manhattan is the narrowest part of the island and the supply of ground there is extremely limited.

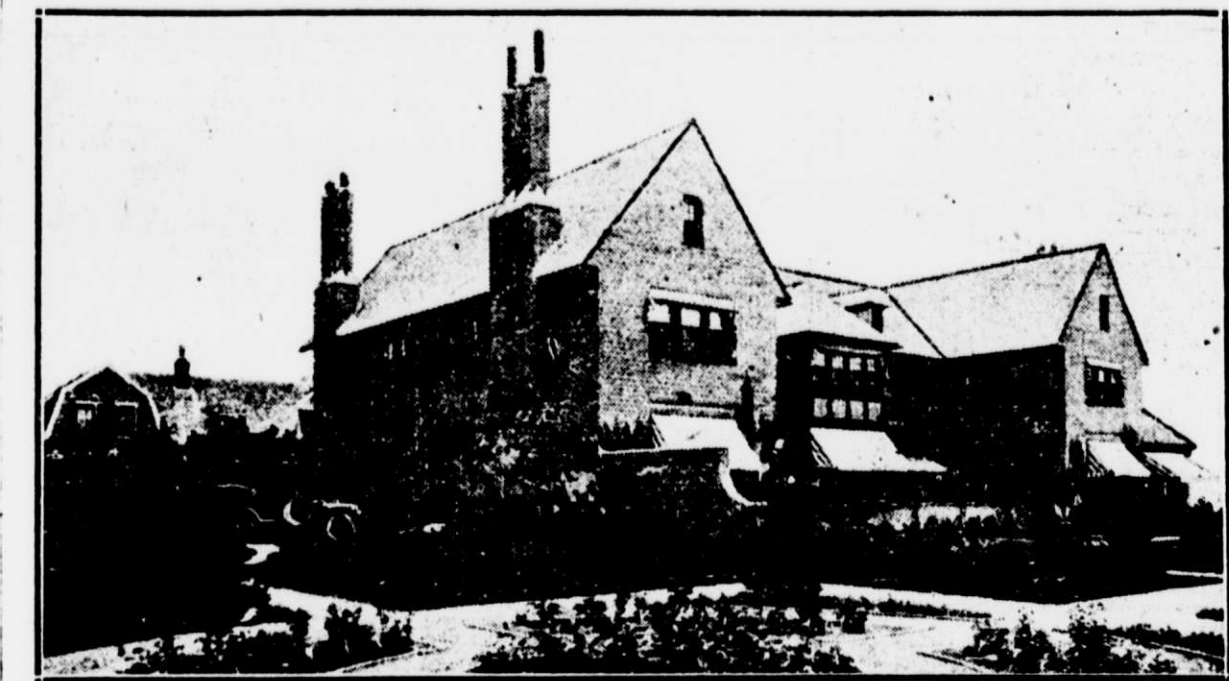
I am confident that underlying conditions in the real estate market indicate that the next speculative movement of large proportions will occur in the downtown district. There is no question, in my judgment, but that real estate speculation, operators and investors will soon turn their attention to lower Manhattan, and just as soon as trading conditions in the real estate market are again normal the activity in downtown property will perhaps surprise even the most optimistic.

CHARLES F. NOYES.

farm buildings on a large estate near Rhinebeck has a rough stone chimney one-third the width of the house ornamenting one end of it and furnishing a tasteful contrast to the smooth Colonial woodwork of which the house is constructed.

Half timber houses, with their strong

of the chimney as a feature of his houses. Americans do not have fireplaces in their rooms. Two or three flues will serve for even rather a pretentious American house. The few fireplaces that are built into American rooms are very rarely intended for practical use. The average architect has sufficient artistic conscience



Page & Frothingham, architects. HERE THE CHIMNEYS RELIEVE THE FLATNESS OF OUTLINE.

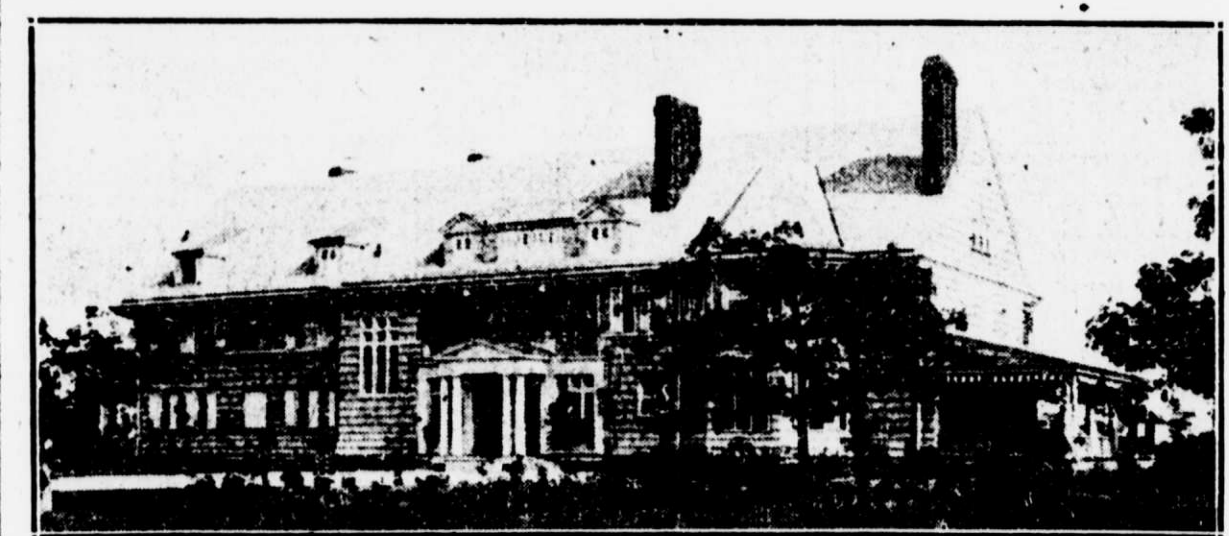
suggestion of English origin, are particularly subject to ornamentation by the chimney. In such a case the dark red bricks furnish a pleasant note of color. On the other hand architects have frequently taken to using bricks that harmonize in tone with the gray or buff surface of the house.

There is of course a practical reason for the American architect's long neglect

to know that a fireplace is really essential to every room. It is, as it were, the altar of the chamber and there is no more sacred spot in any home than the hearth. Yet it is only within comparatively recent years that this detail of interior decoration has come to have any real significance to the average American.

So long as the house is heated by the supply of steam and there is a gas log

than ever a distinctive decorative feature of the exterior of the house. It will assume something like the importance it holds now in the estimate of English architects. Nobody who has ever seen the work of the recent Englishmen failed to appreciate the beauty which they import to the chimney, never failing by some imaginative use of color or form or proportion to make this detail of construction contribute its share of beauty to the whole.



Lord & Hewlett, Architects. HOUSE AT BERNARDSVILLE WITH CHIMNEYS THAT SUPPLY THE NECESSARY RELIEF TO THE LONG ROOF.

LEXINGTON AVENUE'S FUTURE

CHANGES LOOKED FOR ON ACCOUNT OF THE SUBWAY.

The Avenue Is Likely to Be a Shopping Center North of the Grand Central—Skirts a Wealthy Residence Colony, to Which It Will Supply Transit.

The outlook for Lexington avenue is brighter now than it has been for many years. The controversy over the construction of the trolley system is bound to be settled before long. The public is assured that no matter who gets the contract a subway will be built under Lexington avenue from Forty-second street north and a rise in values along this thoroughfare is expected in conformity with experience wherever subway transit is in operation.

Values in Lexington avenue north of Forty-second street and south of Ninety-sixth street are lower than in any other central avenue in Manhattan. There seems to be good reason to believe that in the future Lexington avenue values will compare favorably with those in Sixth avenue between Forty-fifth and Fifty-ninth streets. The majority of the residents who live west of Lexington avenue and east of Fifth avenue have found it necessary to use public conveyances to reach the lower section of Manhattan, have used the Madison avenue and the Sixth avenue car lines.

When the new subway is completed there will be a radical change and the large majority of these people will use Lexington avenue.

open, as all streets from Forty-fifth street north will have crossings at grade level. Lexington avenue during the last ten years has as a whole been more dormant than the adjoining avenues, but its awakening is sure to follow the breaking of ground for the subway, which must come within the next twelve months. Then this avenue will be turned into a retail shopping and market district which should be better patronized than Sixth avenue, as it is surrounded from Thirty-fourth street up to Ninety-sixth street by the residences of the wealthy.

The improvements being made by the New York Central in the way of commercial structures on the western side of the avenue from Forty-fifth to Fifty-fifth streets will make one of the most unique stretches of harmonious architecture in the city and will employ a vast army of people. The contemplated enlargement of a well known department store between Fifty-ninth and Sixtieth streets on the easterly side of Lexington avenue will add to this thoroughfare as a business avenue.

I believe that in the next five years Lexington avenue from Forty-second to Sixty-sixth streets will be almost entirely devoted to business and that values in and about Lexington avenue generally will increase at least 25 per cent. When one considers the enormous advances in lot prices in what is known as the Pennsylvania district and compares it with the slight change in values in property adjacent to the greater improvements now nearing completion at the Grand Central Station one must be convinced that there will soon be a demand in this district which will eventually carry real estate as high as the much sought for properties in the Pennsylvania district.

Rents of stores on Lexington avenue to-day are lower than on Madison, Park Fourth and Third avenues. A reason for this is that it has been held for residential purposes, except at points near cross-town car lines. Single private houses

that have been altered into business buildings with stores below and small apartments on the upper floor show excellent returns on the values of to-day, even at the present low rentals. For instance, a 26 foot four story dwelling near a cross-town line will rent for about \$1,500, except in the Murray Hill section, where rentals are a little higher. By altering such a building at an expense of \$2,000 it will bring in a gross return of \$4,500. This has been demonstrated in many instances. This class of property without alterations sells to-day at \$28.00 to \$32.00 for inside parcels. Lexington avenue will wake up with a start when the subway contracts are awarded.

FRED T. BARRY.

Effect of Road Tar on Vegetation.

Investigation of the effect of tarred roads upon plants was recently undertaken in France by M. Ed. Griffon, a prominent road engineer, and he has presented his conclusions to the Academy of Sciences. There have been various complaints as to the harmful action of tarred roads and sidewalks upon trees and plants. In Paris there were special complaints as to the wide avenue of the Bois de Boulogne, although the roadway there is separated from the grass plots or ornamental plants by a non-tarred way of forty feet width for equestrians.

M. Griffon was engaged in 1908 by the Paris authorities to investigate the effects of tarred roads, with plants under glass in his tubes showed that the gases coming from tar, especially when they are hot, kill the cells of the vegetable tissues. But the vapors given off by the tar on roads in the open air are very much diluted.

The author found that dust taken from the avenue of the Bois de Boulogne and sprinkled on leaves of certain tender varieties of plants caused a burning effect that did not occur with ordinary dust. However, numerous ornamental plants, shrubbery and trees showed no injury. The author expressed himself in favor of tarring or asphaltizing, and considered that in view of the very slight damage to plants observed it would be unjust to cast discredit upon a process which has such decided advantages.

Engineering News.

THE MONEY VALUE OF LIGHT

A SPECIAL EXPOSITION IN SOME TRADES.

Among the Highest Rents in the City Are Those Paid in the Jewelry District for Quarters Looking North, Where Daylight Is Scarce.

The light most desired by storekeepers and manufacturers is the north light. This is preferred because it is less warm, for displaying wares and for working. It is clear without being glaring.

That manufacturers consider the right sort of exposure an important adjunct of business premises may be seen from the higher rents they pay for quarters facing the north. At least 5 per cent more is charged by landlords for north light than for south light. In some cases the difference is said to be as high as 15 and 20 per cent.

Another indication of the preference given to the north light is that the south side of streets in business sections is always the more modern. Builders, knowing what manufacturers want, build up the south side first. To verify this all one has to do is to walk through the mercantile district north of Twenty-third street, which has sprung into existence during the last five years.

The transformation started in Twenty-seventh street and the first business building to be erected was on the south side of the street. The improvement of the south side continued until sales were limited; then only was the north side built up. The same procedure was followed in the other streets of this section. To-day one will find fewer old fashioned buildings on the south side than on the north side of any of the streets in question.

As a rule the leading business houses are on the south side of the street. In the diamond trade this is notably the case in Maiden lane between Broadway and Nassau street. On the downtown side of Maiden lane are the diamond exchange and a score of big dealers, who pay a higher rate for offices than is paid anywhere else south of Chambers street except in the heart of the financial district. In the building at the southeast corner of Broadway and Maiden lane more than \$1 a square foot is paid for corner offices. The building is preferred by diamond dealers, because it is so located that most of its light is from the north and northwest.

Cutting precious stones is a delicate business, and only under a light which throws no shadows is it ever attempted. A false stroke occasioned by the shadow of the cutter's instrument across the stone may depreciate the value of the gem considerably. The firms that can't get north light do their cutting and fine work under artificial light.

As diamonds and other precious stones are valued by their lustre they must be judged in a pure light. Hence a dealer will never locate opposite a building with a yellow or light brown front, as the reflection will deaden the brilliancy of his gems. Not many years ago a man who had a grudge against a jeweller painted his house, which was directly across the way from the jeweller's store, a bright yellow. The house was on the north side of the street and the reflection on it affected the jeweller's trade to such an extent that an order of court was obtained compelling the owner of the yellow house to repaint his wall a color that would not injure his neighbor's business.

More recently the diamond exchange was confronted with a similar trouble. An office building with a yellow brick front was put up opposite the exchange. The exchange solved the difficulty by excluding natural light completely. All the windows were boarded up, the rooms were hung with black velvet and clusters of electric lights were installed. Indeed some of the members claimed that as the stones are worn mostly at night they should be judged under artificial light.

The cloak and suit manufacturer is almost as exacting about his light as the diamond merchant. Never will you see him display a sample in the sun. It will not show up to the best advantage. The north light, soft and clear, brings out all the good points of the goods. The color is not affected and the draping qualities of the cloth are shown to advantage.

The south light is shunned also by dealers in tapestry, silks and laces. Architects, pattern makers, designers, instrument makers, and in fact all who require time and exacting workmanship want the north light, and will pay much more for it than for any other light.

In the shopping streets the sun is carefully shut out. On Fifth avenue, Broadway, Fourteenth, Twenty-third, Forty-second and 125th streets most of the big stores are on the shady side of the street.

Thirty-fourth street is an exception, but such houses there as Altman's, McCreary's, Revillon Freres and Oppenheims, Collins & Co., had to go content with the north side, as much of the south side was preempted by the Waldorf-Astoria. Besides, a hotel as a next door neighbor does not act as a stimulus to trade.

Contrary to the rule elsewhere lots on the sunny side of Thirty-fourth street are worth at least \$20,000 more than those on the shady side. On Twenty-third street and other streets where conditions are normal the best trade always seeks the south side. In Fourteenth street the north side is no better built up to-day than it was ten years ago. On Twenty-third street, according to Herman Desjardins, an expert appraiser, the shady or south side is about 50 per cent more valuable than the north.

On Broadway all of the department stores and the leading special shops are on the west side of the street, with the exception of Wanamaker's and Rogers Peet & Co. On the east side are hotels and business houses of the sort that do not depend on the afternoon shopper.

Though southern exposure is undesirable in business sections it is preferred in residential streets. A private house facing the south is worth 2 to 3 per cent more than one looking north. Years ago, however, the reverse was true. That was when houses were not so close as they are now. The arrangement of the rooms was then different from what it is now. The library and the bedrooms were in the front of the house over the parlor. Now these rooms are in the rear. The sunny side is of course the best. The sun, pouring in all day, dries up dampness quickly. It is not unusual to see after a storm the north side of the street dry, while the south side is still wet.

Another thing that makes the north side more desirable for residences is that it is warmer in winter and cooler in summer than the south side. The dwellings erected in the last five or ten years are on the east side of the way.

The northeast corner is the ideal spot for a dwelling. In the morning the sun in the rear, looking north, warms the south and west. William H. Folsom and Herman De Selding have both testified in court that such a corner is the best. In a business section they testified that the southwest corner is the most valuable.